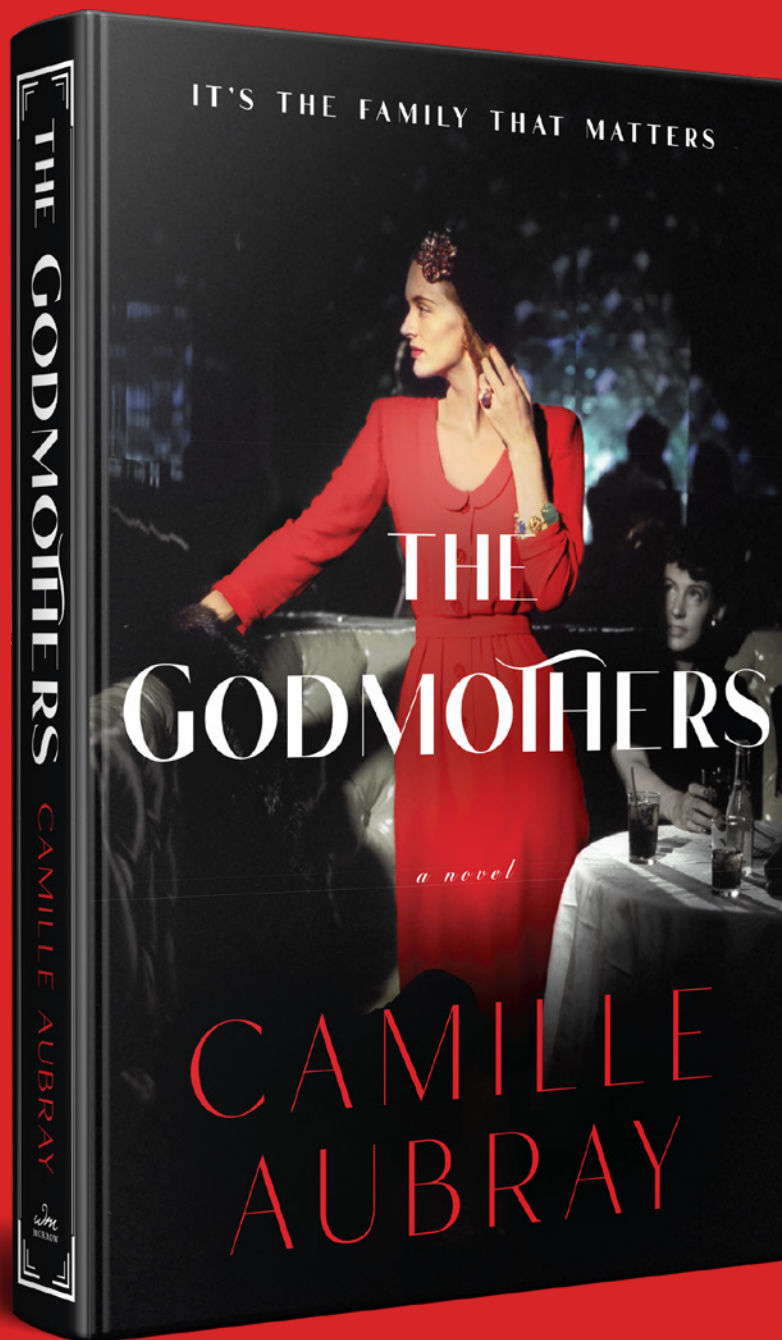


BOOK CLUB KIT



Host the perfect book club event with Camille Aubray's

THE GODMOTHERS

Discussion Questions



1. In the Prologue, a young woman, Nicole, must face questions about her family's past. What is your experience of uncovering your own family's buried memories and history?
2. There are four godmothers—Filomena, Lucy, Amie, and Petrina. Which character did you most identify with, and why?
3. Discuss each of the Godmothers' secrets. What were the consequences of keeping these things secret? How and when were they revealed?
4. Discuss the real-life gangsters who appear in the novel: Lucky Luciano, Frank Costello, Albert Anastasia, and Tommy "Three Finger" Lucchese. How do they differ from one another, and what threats did they pose?
5. The three brothers are Johnny, Frankie, and Mario. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?
6. How did Gianni, the patriarch, and Tessa, the matriarch, impact the family?
7. How would you have handled the threat of the Pericolo brothers?
8. When the story moves into 1957, how do the Godmothers try to protect their sons and daughters? How do the children declare their independence?
9. What was the scariest moment in the book for you? The most touching?



THE GODMOTHERS

Music Playlist



1. That'll Be the Day—Buddy Holly and the Crickets (Chapter 34)
2. Jailhouse Rock—Elvis Presley (Chapter 34)
3. Chances Are—Johnny Mathis (Chapter 34)
4. Me and My Gal—Judy Garland & Gene Kelly (Chapter 32)
5. Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin' — Bing Crosby (Chapter 26)
6. So in Love—Vic Damone (Chapter 25)
7. The Brooklyn Bridge—Frank Sinatra
8. Luck Be A Lady—Frank Sinatra
9. All Shook Up—Elvis Presley
10. You Send Me—Sam Cooke
11. Pistol-Packing Mamma—Bing Crosby



Camille's Cocktails

Create signature cocktails inspired by the book

FRANKIE'S CLASSIC MANHATTAN (chapter 9)

- 2-3 ounces of good-quality whiskey. Bourbon or rye is best. (I prefer Maker's Mark bourbon).
- 2-3 ounces of sweet red vermouth. (I prefer Dolin vermouth).
- a squeeze of fresh orange juice or a twist of orange peel.
- a dried cherry or pitted fresh one. (Never use Maraschino!)

Ice these ingredients together with cubes, not shavings, of ice. When the glass feels cold, remove the cubes and serve in a cocktail glass.



PETRINA'S CHAMPAGNE COCKTAIL (chapter 10)

- 1 ounce good brandy
- 4 ounces cold brut (dry) champagne
- a fresh orange or lemon for juice

Pour brandy into a champagne glass. Add the champagne slowly to let the bubbles settle. Then add a drop or two of fresh orange or lemon juice.



A NON-ALCOHOLIC COCKTAIL

- 1-2 tablespoons of unsweetened cranberry juice or cherry juice
- the juice of half a lemon or orange or lime
- cold sparkling water

Put the juices into a champagne glass, then add the sparkling water.



Q&A with Camille Aubray



Q. What inspired you to write this novel?

A. I respectfully disagree with Tolstoy when he said that all happy families are alike. Even happy families have their unique and secret troubles, and that's what interests me. In *THE GODMOTHERS*, I imagined four women from totally different backgrounds, each with their own devastating secrets, who become sisters-in-law.

Q. What intrigued you about the idea of godmothers?

A. A godmother is very different from being a parent—who has total responsibility for the upbringing—and it's different from an indulgent and slightly subversive grandparent. Think of the importance of the fairy godmother in children's stories! She offers alternatives, so that you don't give up when the world is dealing you a bad hand. That's what my four godmothers—Filomena, Lucy, Amie and Petrina—try to do.

Q. What made you pick this historical time and place for the book?

A. I used to work in television in Manhattan, and I loved its rich history, and glamorous locales—the Copacabana, Bergdorf Goodman's, Balducci's Market, the Majestic apartments. I was particularly fascinated by the period of the 1930s-1950s, and I just couldn't resist writing about the outsized, real-life gangsters of the Five Families of New York.

Q. What kind of research did you need to do to recreate that time period?

A. It's like visiting a foreign country—there are universal ways that all human beings behave, no matter the time and place; and then there are the things that are particular to a locale or an era. I read all kinds of history and nonfiction, but I especially loved looking at the newspapers and the music of the time. They tell you a lot that you don't get in history books!

Q. What do you hope readers will get out of your book?

A. I hope that readers will recognize how often women are underestimated by the people around them. But there is also a special strength that women have, especially when they decide to team up. My heroines aren't loners who karate-chop their way through life to get "empowered." Their power comes from their ability to see past their own differences and grudges, to reach out, not only to one another but to the world at large. They are courageous and they seek a better life. Together, they find a way to make that happen.



About Camille Aubray



Camille Aubray is the author of the novel *Cooking for Picasso*, chosen for *People Magazine*'s Picks of the Best New Books, and the Indie Next Reading Groups List. Aubray was an Edward Albee Foundation Fellowship winner and a writer-in-residence at the Karolyi Foundation in the South of France. She was also a staff writer for the daytime dramas *One Life to Live* and *Capitol*. Aubray studied writing with her mentor Margaret Atwood at Humber College in Toronto, and was a finalist for the Pushcart Press Editors' Book Award and the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference.



Praise for THE GODMOTHERS



“Aubray portrays her strong characters as intelligent, brave, and even ruthless women.
**This is historical fiction at its best, bringing along thrilling scenes,
passionate love affairs and a bounty of secrets.”**

—*Booklist*

“**Aubray delivers an addictive and tense multigenerational feminist romp through
WWII-era New York City** ... The enormous cast and multiple complicated subplots are
smoothly handled, with the tensions between the godmothers easily propelling the narrative.
This credibly flips the script on male-dominated Mafia stories.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Setting her tale mostly in the 1930s and '40s, Aubray uses the dramatic changes in America to
highlight the family drama—a saga reminiscent of Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola.
Unlike them, though, Aubray focuses on the challenges particular to women ...
As violence erupts, power shifts, and war rises once again, the four women learn to negotiate
power on their own terms. **A fast-paced, drama-filled portrait of a family dynasty.**”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“21 Upcoming Historical Fiction **Books You’re Going to Love!**”

—*Buzzfeed*

“**New Books You Don’t Want to Miss This Summer!**”

—*Veranda*

“**Buzz Books: Fiction Spring/Summer 2021 List**”

—*Publishers Marketplace*

“Aubray marries history, suspense and womanhood in a story perfect for devouring.”

—*Newsweek’s Best Books of the Summer*

